

Executive Pastry Chef Nick Malgieri Article



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Nick Malgieri is the national spokesperson for the Switzerland Tourism Gastronomy and Wine program. After culinary school in the United States, he apprenticed in Switzerland and has maintained close ties with the country ever since through frequent visits. A frequent traveler to other destinations, he collects recipes everywhere. Below is a sample of some of the recipes from his book, *A Baker's Tour: Nick Malgieri's Favorite Baking Recipes from Around the World* (HarperCollins, October 2005).

Additional information on Nick Malgieri: www.nickmalgieri.com 

Vienna



A demure courtesan who succeeds in seducing everyone with her subtle charms, Vienna has been desired, fought over, and adored for over a thousand years. As capital of the Hapsburg Empire Vienna became one of the most architecturally beautiful and culturally prominent cities in the world, distinctions that have not faded close to a hundred years after the establishment of the Republic of Austria. Vienna's prominence reached its apex during the glittering reign of Emperor Franz Josef and his wife, the non-conformist Empress Elizabeth, still beloved by the Viennese by her nickname Sisi. Even in today's Vienna it's possible to see concrete evidence of the Viennese love of the monarchy. Many businesses, who were former suppliers to the imperial court, identify themselves as K&K, an abbreviation of the German for "royal and imperial" referring to Franz Josef's double crown as King of Hungary and Emperor of Austria.

Since the eighteenth century Viennese cooking and baking have been shoulder to shoulder with those of France, a culture so loved by the Viennese that upper class speech was frequently peppered with French words and phrases. The culinary influence of France, coupled with that of the Empire's vast territorial holdings, has yielded a tradition of cooking and baking rich in elegance, charm, and infinite variety. I could go on and on, but you would be better served by reading one or both of my favorite books about Viennese life: *The Viennese* (Times Books, 1988) by Paul Hofmann, a former New York Times Vienna bureau chief, and *Gourmet's Old Vienna Cookbook* (Gourmet Books, 1959) by Lillian Langseth Christensen, a frequent contributor to *Gourmet* magazine during its great days. Her fifty-odd pages of stories about Viennese food customs were my introduction, as a teenager, to the glories of Vienna.

Following are my favorite places in Vienna for traditional or contemporary food and sweets. Although I can't guarantee it, you almost can't go wrong. Last year, famished after 8 hours of interviewing and note taking for a magazine story, a photographer and I wandered into a Hungarian restaurant that looked like a typical tourist trap – we were so hungry we didn't care. Inside we found a mix of Viennese office workers, shoppers, and a few tourists and soon we were enjoying what I still think of as the best pork and sauerkraut goulash I've ever tasted.

NOTE: Vienna is divided into 23 districts (Bezirke in German). An address is frequently preceded by the district number, making it easier to pinpoint its location.

Dress Code: Some elegant restaurants still require jacket and tie for male guests. Always check when making a reservation.

Zum Schwarzen Kameel

"The Black Camel" is a historical place with a dark-wood clubby atmosphere that serves up some of the best traditional Viennese food in town. The Tafelspitz (boiled beef), a Viennese classic, is at its best here. Don't miss their tiny, art nouveau jewel box of a pastry shop down the street.

Zum Schwarzen Kameel
1st district, Bognergasse 5
Phone: 011 431 533 8125

www.kameel.at 

Restaurant Korso

An elegant contemporary setting with views of the opera house across the street, Korso's kitchens are under the direction of

Chef Gerald Angelmahr. Light modern cooking easily merges with Viennese classics on the tempting menu that features local pike perch with bell peppers and thyme; braised veal with kohlrabi; and a very Viennese poached egg with potato puree, spinach, and summer truffles.

Restaurant Korso (in the Hotel Bristol)

1st district, Mahlerstrasse 2

Phone: 011 431 515 16546

www.restaurantkorso.at 

Julius Meinl am Graben

Vienna's most luxurious fancy food store also houses a fine restaurant, one of the best in all Vienna. Chef Joachim Gradwohl prepares a contemporary take on traditional Viennese food with subtle Mediterranean influences. Enjoy lovely views of the Graben's classic architecture below the restaurant's windows.

Julius Meinl am Graben

1st district, Graben near Kohlmarkt

Phone: 011 431 532 3334 x 6000

www.meinlamgraben.at 

Oesterreicher im MAK

Helmut Oesterreicher distinguished himself as a chef at Vienna's classic Steirereck, still a not to be missed destination for a wonderful meal. MAK is the German language abbreviation for Museum for Applied Arts and the restaurant occupies the space formerly devoted to the museum's café. Featuring menus of both classical and modern Viennese cuisine, all the food here is characterized by Oesterreicher's light touch. A friend was recently enchanted here by a dish of hand-made noodles with three types of cucumber and asked for the recipe, never expecting it to be delivered a few minutes later written in the chef's own hand.

Oesterreicher im MAK

1st district, Stubenring 5

Phone: 011 431 714 0121

E-mail: reservierung@oesterreicherimmak.at

www.oesterreicherimmak.at 

Steirereck im Stadtpark

Set in a beautiful pavilion in the city's Stadtpark, the restaurant's kitchens are overseen by Chef Heinz Reitbauer. Foie gras with wild mushrooms, cod with beets and radishes, and saddle of lamb with chanterelles cannot help but enchant. This is the perfect place for a celebration lunch while in Vienna.

Restaurant Steirereck

3rd district, Am Heumarkt 2A (in the Stadtpark)

Phone: 011 431 713 3168

E-mail: wien@steirereck.at

www.steirereck.at 

Schnattl

Delicate cooking in the setting of a typical Beisl or casual neighborhood restaurant is the specialty of Chef Wilhelm Schnattl. Fee range chicken with chanterelles, tarragon-braised salmon trout with tomato risotto, and classic Viennese desserts are on the menu. In charming Josefstadt a short way from the center of the city.

Restaurant Schnattl

8th district, Lange Gasse 40

Phone: 011 431 405 3300

E-mail: schnattl@aon.at

www.schnattl.com 

Heurigen

A Heuriger is a wine garden where, in the past, the winemaker would tie a pine branch to his gate to signify that the new wine was ready for drinking. Today Heurigen (the plural) function 12 months a year, though they are most popular in warm weather when outdoor seating is possible. Food is available from a buffet – cheeses, cold cuts and sausages, roasts, salads, vegetable dishes and simple desserts are standard fare. Don't be afraid to point at what you want in the showcase or steam table, though many buffet servers now speak a little English. The menu is pretty much standard, so just the names and contact information are listed below.

Mayer am Pfarrplatz is housed in a building where Beethoven once lived. It's one of the more touristy Heurigen, but everyone still loves it.

19th district, Pfarrplatz 2
Phone: 011 431 370 1287
E-mail: mayer@pfarrplatz.at

www.pfarrplatz.at 

Hengl Haselbrunner boasts excellent food and wine in an area where many of the Heurigen have become touristy.
19th district, Iglaseegasse 10
Phone: 011 431 320 3330
E-mail: office@hengl-haselbrunner.at

www.hengl-haselbrunner.at 

Wieninger is reputed to have some of the best food and wine available at a Heuriger.
21st district, Stammersdorfer Strasse 31
Phone: 011 431 290 1012
E-mail: office@heuriger-wieninger.at

www.wieninger.at 

Pastry Shops and Coffee Houses

Everyone in Vienna has a favorite coffee house, whether it's for the coffee, a sweet or savory dish, or just the relaxing atmosphere it provides. Here are my favorites, though there are close to 100 to choose from. More than 40 of them are within the central part of Vienna's district 1.

Demel

The former "royal and imperial court sugar baker" stands just steps from the Hofburg or former Imperial Palace. Emperor Franz Josef was fond of sending gifts from Demel to his friends and it's said that his wife, Empress Elizabeth, would drink no coffee that was not prepared there. Today Demel is no longer THE lunch gathering place for Viennese high society that it once was, but a quick walk through its several floors of seating areas will yield a decent enough sprinkling of exquisitely well-dressed old Vienna to satisfy any dedicated people watcher. Fortunately, the cakes, Demel's star attraction, are as good as ever. Don't miss Punschtorte, with its pink fondant over a layer of marzipan, or Anna Demel Torte, an all-chocolate indulgence peppered with pralin. The front-room café has now become a sales area for the beautifully packaged chocolates and other confections that are synonymous with Demel's glorious past.

Demel
1st district, Kohlmarkt 14
Phone: 011 431 535 1717
E-mail: wien@demel.at

www.demel.at 

Hotel Sacher

Home of the famous Sachertorte, this venerable institution has had its ups and downs. Recently renovated, it's gleaming again. The corner café serves the Sachertorte accompanied by a small mountain of whipped cream. Though it's widely imitated all over Vienna, and even Demel is said to prepare it from exactly the same recipe as the hotel, I still like the Sacher's version better. Not a very moist cake, I've always found that the Sacher's version is less dry and crumbly than the one at Demel.

Hotel Sacher
1st district, Philharmonikerstrasse 4
Phone: 011 431 514 560
E-mail: wien@sacher.com

www.sacher.com 

Café Diglas

Hans Diglas is a third-generation owner of this coffee house in the winding streets right behind the Stephansdom, or St. Stephen's Cathedral, the traditional dead center of Vienna. A few years ago he expanded to a pastry shop a few blocks away where most of the baking production now takes place. An energetic man who uses a bicycle to ferry back and forth between his two businesses, Diglas is one of the driving forces behind the preservation of Vienna's historic treasury of sweet lore. An innovator who looks back as well as ahead, Diglas is reviving interest in classic Mehlspeisen (literally "flour dishes," referring to puddings, dumplings, and other sweet dishes containing flour) and always offers a few daily specials of them at the Café. On my last trip to Vienna I visited Café Diglas on two successive days, in the late afternoon and the early morning. Sure enough, there were entire tables of guests enjoying an early dinner of Kaiserschmarren (Emperor's Folly), a kind of soufflé omelet, shredded into bite-size pieces, then sauté with raisins in lots of butter, dredged with confectioners' sugar and served with a sauceboat of Powidl, a cross between preserves and a compote made from late-harvest prune plums cooked down without the

addition of sugar. Powidl is about as Viennese as you can get. Next morning one of the specials was Mohr im Hemd, a baked chocolate pudding awash in a sea of chocolate sauce, not a bad way to get your eggs for breakfast. You can't go to Vienna without visiting Diglas.

Café Diglas Café Konditorei Diglas
1st district, Wollzeile 10 1st district, Am Fleischmarkt 16
Phone for both: 011 431 512 5765
E-mail: office@diglas.at

www.diglas.at 

Café Imperial

As much for the eye-popping opulence of the setting as anything else, Café Imperial is a must-see on any trip to Vienna. Housed in the elegant hotel of the same name, this is the home of the Imperial Torte, a rich confection of almond cake layers filled and covered with a buttery ganache. Shipped all over the world like the Sachertorte, the cake's entire production is handled by pastry chef Christian Csencsits and one assistant who literally finish off about 5 yards of it at a time. The cake is then enrobed in tempered chocolate and decorated with the signature Imperial seal.

Café Imperial
1st district, Kaerntner Ring 16
Phone: 011 431 510 10 389
www.imperial-torte.at

www.austria.starwoodhotels.com 

Austrian Wines

Eastern Austria is wine country and 3 regions, Lower Austria, Burgenland, and Styria, produce most of the wine, while some vineyards are at Heurigen that are actually within the city walls of Vienna. Total land devoted to vineyards exceeds 125,000 acres.

There are sixteen distinct wine growing areas, which produce both dry and sweet white wines as well as red wines.

Austria has over 20,000 wine producers, many of whom sell the wines they make on their own premises as did the Heurigen of the past. More than half the wine producers in Austria grow grapes on 12 acres or less.

Small production usually makes for high quality wines recently small producers have developed Austrian wines of remarkable quality. Since almost 75% of the wine made in Austria (over 2.5 billion liters a year) never leaves the country, visiting Vienna is a great way to try the best available.

The majority of wine produced in Austria is Gruener Veltliner, a dry white wine, though 30% of total production is actually red wine.

Classification of most Austrian wines follows the German system established about 60 years ago:

Tafelwein (table wine) may be a mixture of wines from different regions.

Landwein (regional wine) is a table wine that comes from a single region.

Qualitaetswein (quality wine) is a superior wine from a single region.

Kabinett (literally cabinet, referring to a wine of higher quality) is a semi-sweet wine.

Prädikatswein refers to a whole range of sweet wines including Spaetlese (late harvest), Auslese (selected bunches),

Beerenauslese (selected individual grapes), Trockenbeerenauslese (grapes covered with botrytis mold, aka "noble rot"),

Eiswein (wine made from grapes that have frozen on the vine), and Strohwein (wine made from grapes dried on straw mats).

The Wachau region uses its own classifications of Steinfeder (Landwein), Federspiel (Kabinett), and Smaragd (literally emerald, referring to high quality white wines).

Yet another system of classification is in the trial stage.

I'm afraid it's all a little confusing, which is why I never hesitate to ask a friendly waiter or wine steward for a recommendation.

Recipe: Wiener Vanillekipferl (Viennese Vanilla Crescents)

These are among the most delicate and delicious cookies that exist. They're often made with hazelnuts or walnuts too, but almonds are my favorite.

Makes about 48 small cookies

18 tablespoons (2 1/4 sticks) unsalted butter, softened

1 cup confectioners' sugar

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

4 ounces (about 1 cup) blanched almonds, finely ground in the food processor

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour (spoon flour into dry-measure cup and level off)

Confectioners' or superfine sugar for finishing the cookies

2 cookie sheets or jellyroll pans covered with parchment or foil

1. Set racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven and preheat to 350 degrees.
2. On lowest speed with the paddle, beat the butter and confectioners' sugar together. Increase the speed to medium and continue beating until light, about 2 or 3 minutes longer. Beat in the vanilla.
3. Lower the speed and beat in the almonds and flour to form a soft dough.

4. Scrape the dough to a floured work surface and press it together if necessary. Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces. Roll each piece to a thin cylinder and cut it into 12 equal pieces. Shape each piece of dough into a 2-inch cylinder, then roll over the ends to point them.
5. Transfer the pieces of dough to the prepared pans, curving the cookies into crescent shapes.
6. Bake the cookies until they are very pale golden, about 20 to 25 minutes.
7. Cool on the pans on racks – the cookies are too fragile to move when still warm.
8. Sift your choice of sugar over the cooled cookies and store them in a tin between sheets of wax paper.